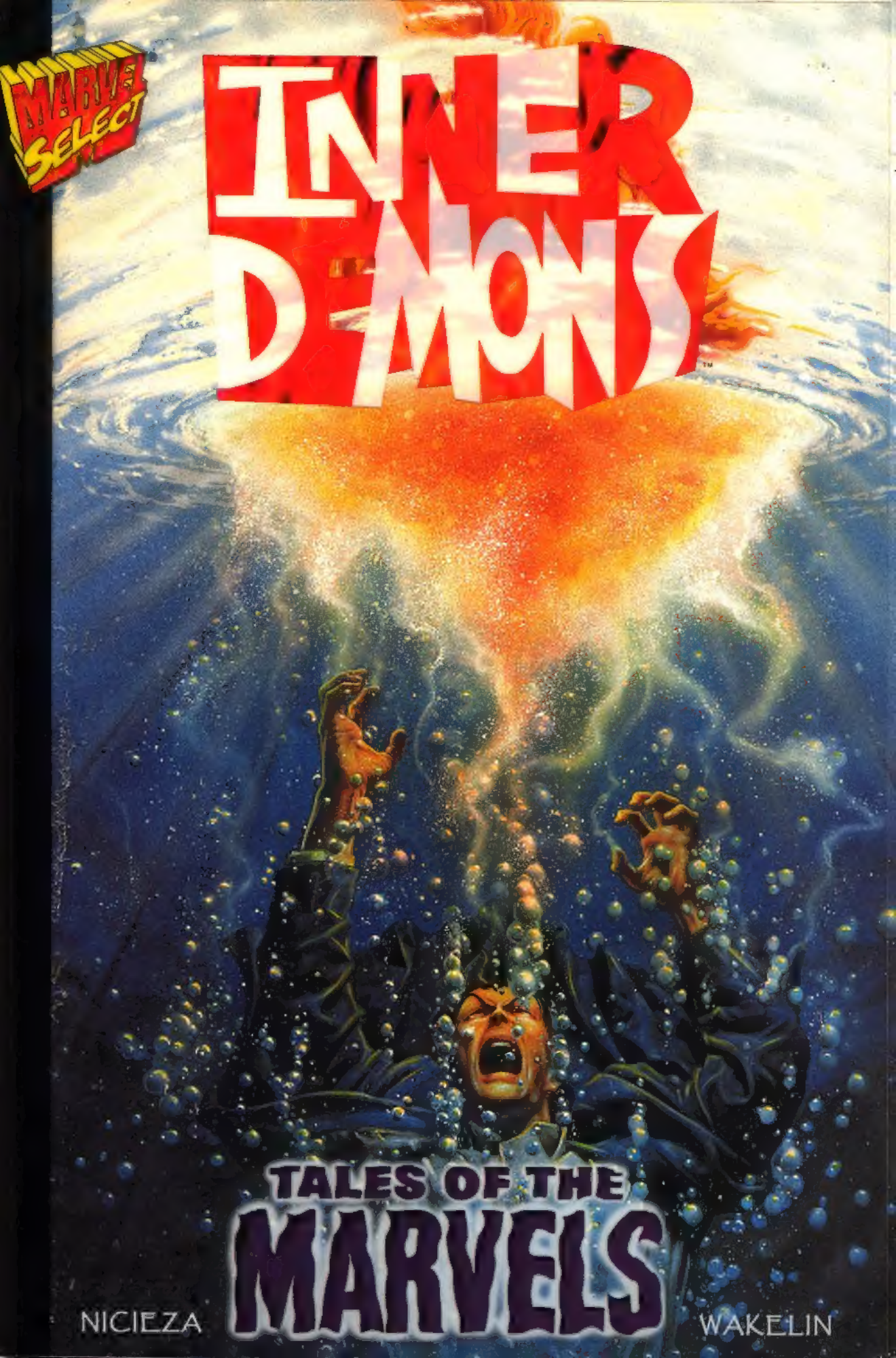

MARVEL SELECT
INNER DEMONS
TALES OF THE MARVELS
NICIEZA
WAKELIN

INNER DEMONS™

Mariano Nicieza
story

Bob Wakelin
& Studio Infinity
art

Jim Novak
logo

Bill Oakley
lettering

Marc McLaurin
editor

Anita Sharpe
assistant

Deb Brust
Manufacturing

Carl Potts
executive editor

Bob Harras
chief

Dedication

Special thanks to Studio Infinity: Floyd Hughes, Terese Neilsen, Ken Meyer, Scott Sava, Omar Lewis and Randy DuBurke, and all the others who helped make this project possible.

To Annemarie,
Thanks for the support and love.
–Mariano Nicieza

To Simon Ryder; thanks, mate!
–Bob Wakelin

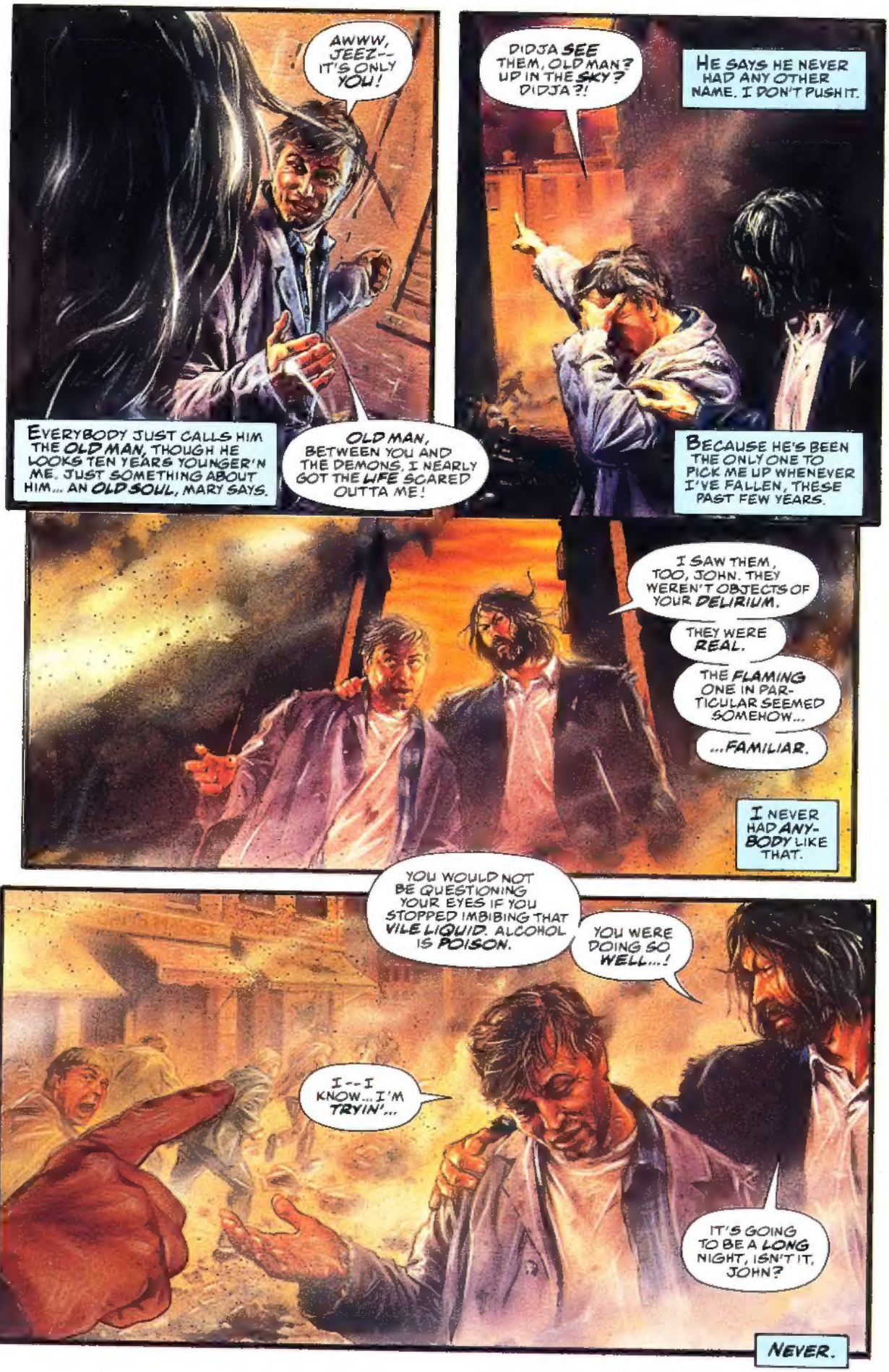
TALES OF THE MARVELS™: INNER DEMONS. Published by MARVEL COMICS, Gerard Calabrese, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. Copyright © 1995 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. GST #R127032852. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. NAMOR, THE SUB-MARINER (including all related characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) is a trademark of MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC. Printed in the U.S.A.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

NEW YORK CITY.
COLD, HARD, DIRTY... I HATE THESE STREETS.
BUT THEY'LL NEVER TURN YOU OUT, AND NEVER LET YOU DOWN.
"DOWN." FUNNY... FROM HERE, THERE'S NOWHERE TO GO BUT UP.
TASTIC FOUR
'MOLE' MAN
DAILY BUGLE
MARVEL?
THIS TIME, I THOUGHT I BEAT IT... I REALLY DID.
MORE THAN A MONTH OFF THE JUICE... KICKED THE D.T.'S, EVERYTHING.
THEN I FIGURED, WHY NOT TEST IT? SEE HOW I HANDLED IT?
IT HANDLED ME. I FELL OFF THE WAGON...

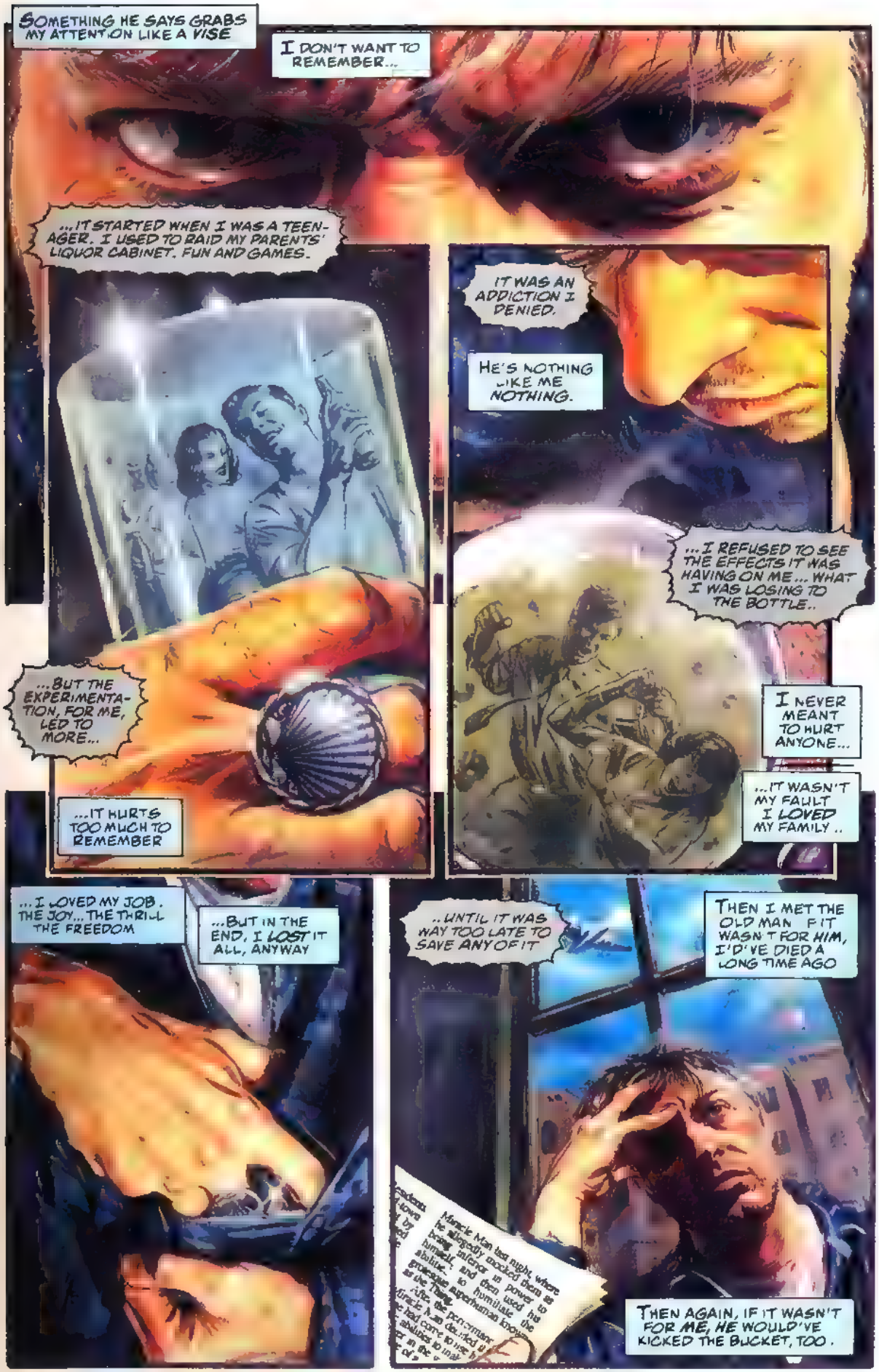
...AND INTO HELL.
IT'S FINALLY HAPPENED--I'VE LOST IT!
I'M INSANE.

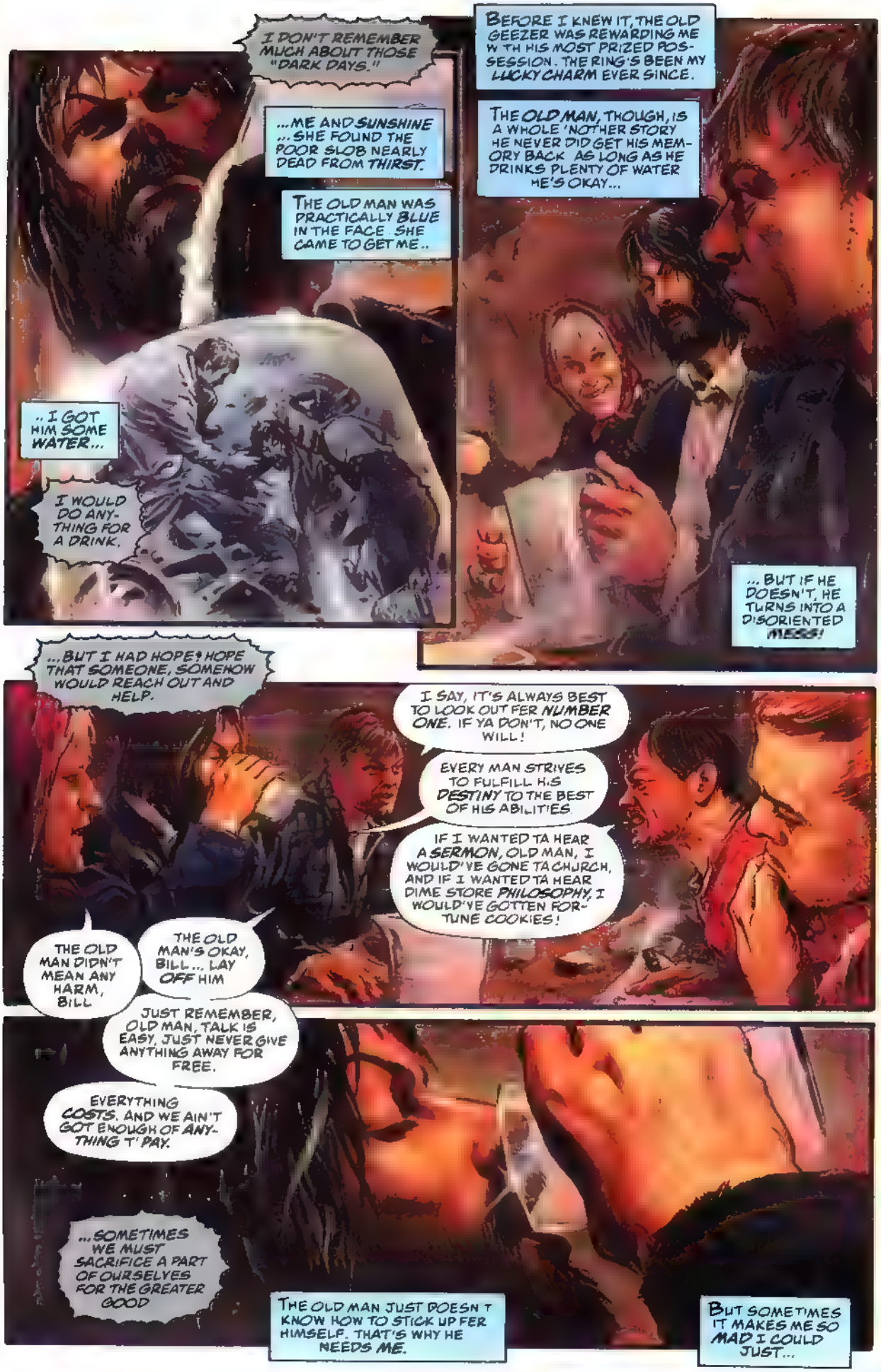
HEL...
...HELP.
HELP!!
OMIGOWD... I'LL NEVER DRINK AGAIN...
:OFGHFN!:
...NEVER!
CAREFUL, MY FRIEND, YOU'LL HURT YOURSELF, OR EVEN WORSE...
...YOU'LL SCRATCH THE RING.


AWWW, JEEZ-- IT'S ONLY YOU!
EVERYBODY JUST CALLS HIM THE OLD MAN, THOUGH HE LOOKS TEN YEARS YOUNGER'N ME. JUST SOMETHING ABOUT HIM... AN OLD SOUL, MARY SAYS.
OLD MAN, BETWEEN YOU AND THE DEMONS, I NEARLY GOT THE LIFE SCARED OUTTA ME!
DIDJA SEE THEM, OLD MAN? UP IN THE SKY? DIDJA?!
HE SAYS HE NEVER HAD ANY OTHER NAME. I DON'T PUSH IT.
BECAUSE HE'S BEEN THE ONLY ONE TO PICK ME UP WHENEVER I'VE FALLEN, THESE PAST FEW YEARS.
I SAW THEM, TOO, JOHN. THEY WEREN'T OBJECTS OF YOUR DELIRIUM.
THEY WERE REAL.
THE FLAMING ONE IN PARTICULAR SEEMED SOMEHOW...
...FAMILIAR.
I NEVER HAD ANYBODY LIKE THAT.
YOU WOULD NOT BE QUESTIONING YOUR EYES IF YOU STOPPED IMBIBING THAT VILE LIQUID. ALCOHOL IS POISON.
YOU WERE DOING SO WELL...!
I--I KNOW... I'M TRYIN'...
IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG NIGHT, ISN'T IT, JOHN?
NEVER.

THE MORNING AFTER, I'M PAYING FOR MY FALL. BUT THE OLD MAN INSISTS I GOTTA GET SOME FOOD IN ME, SO WE MAKE THE USUAL ROUNDS.
YOU GUYS SEE ANYTHIN'... STRANGE LAST NIGHT?
ARE YOU KIDDING? DON'CHA READ NO PAPERS?
WE ENDED UP AT MALONE'S FLOPHOUSE. I'M SURPRISED TO SEE THE PLACE STILL OPEN.
SOME CLOWN NAMED OSBORN'D BEEN BUYING UP ALL THE SURROUNDING PROPERTY. WANTED TO LEVEL THE BLOCK TO BUILD WAREHOUSES.
IT WASN'T TOO LONG AGO, I WAS NO DIFFERENT THAN YOU...
BUT THESE JOES WOULDN'T SELL. SAID THEY HAD A MISSION HERE.
THE GRUB'S NOT BAD, AND THE PRICE IS RIGHT, EXCEPT FOR THE SPEECHES. BUNCH OF WHINING LOSERS ONSTAGE TELL SOB STORIES WHILE WE EAT.
LIKE I NEED TO HEAR SOMEONE ELSE'S TRAGEDY. I'VE GOT ENOUGH OF MY OWN. AND ENOUGH SENSE TO KEEP IT PRIVATE.
SAYS HERE THEY WERE FIGHTING SOME FREAK CALLED THE MIRACLE MAN. MADE 'EM THINK THEY WUZ SEEIN' SOMETHIN' THAT WASN'T THERE!
...I HAD LOST EVERYTHING, INCLUDING MYSELF...
phaa-- THEY AIN'T NO CAP'N AMERICA OR THE SUB-MAREENER!
DAILY BUGLE 50¢
MIRACLE MAN TERRORIZES MID-TOWN
IT BAFFLED BY ILLUSIONS
YEAH-- IN THE OLD DAYS, WE HAD REAL HEROES --WHO KNEW HOW T'TAKE A SOCK IN THE JAW...
MIRACLE MAN, MY BUTT.
AIN'T NO MIRACLES. NOT IN THIS CITY. NOT IN THIS LIFE.
6shhh, I CAN'T HEAR.
...LOST EVERYTHING THAT MEANT ANYTHING TO ME...

LISTEN UP, JOHN. THIS COULD DO YOU SOME GOOD.
IT WAS SUNSHINE MARY THAT FIRST BROUGHT US TOGETHER. IN ONE OF HER MORE LUCID MOMENTS.
ONE OF THE FEW.
YEAH. SURE, SUNSHINE. WHATEVER YOU SAY.
ER-MAN, NACE OR UEDO'?
DON'T PATRONIZE ME, JOHN MAHONEY!
THAT COULD BE YOU UP THERE!
WHAT?! THAT AIN'T ME!
...I WAS LOST IN THESE STREETS, DROWNING IN AN ALCOHOL-SOAKED WASTELAND...
...I HAD NO HOPE... NO FUTURE... I WAS AN ALCOHOLIC...
YOU REALLY THINK IF I LISTEN REAL HARD, ALL MY TROUBLES WILL BE GONE?
LADY, THAT GUY DON'T KNOW NOTHIN' ABOUT ME!
"ALCOHOLIC"... HOW COULD HE STAND UP THERE AND ADMIT THAT?!
LOST WITH NO HOPE OF FINDING MY WAY BACK AGAIN...
...NOTHING PAST THE QUEST FOR THE NEXT BOTTLE.


SOMETHING HE SAYS GRABS MY ATTENTION LIKE A VISE
I DON'T WANT TO REMEMBER...
...IT STARTED WHEN I WAS A TEENAGER. I USED TO RAID MY PARENTS' LIQUOR CABINET. FUN AND GAMES.
...BUT THE EXPERIMENTATION, FOR ME, LED TO MORE...
...IT HURTS TOO MUCH TO REMEMBER
IT WAS AN ADDICTION I DENIED.
HE'S NOTHING LIKE ME NOTHING.
...I REFUSED TO SEE THE EFFECTS IT WAS HAVING ON ME... WHAT I WAS LOSING TO THE BOTTLE..
I NEVER MEANT TO HURT ANYONE...
...IT WASN'T MY FAULT I LOVED MY FAMILY..
...I LOVED MY JOB. THE JOY... THE THRILL THE FREEDOM
...BUT IN THE END, I LOST IT ALL, ANYWAY
..UNTIL IT WAS WAY TOO LATE TO SAVE ANY OF IT
THEN I MET THE OLD MAN FIT WASN'T FOR HIM, I'D'VE DIED A LONG TIME AGO
Miracle Man last night where he allegedly mocked them as he used his power to humiliate the
THEN AGAIN, IF IT WASN'T FOR ME, HE WOULD'VE KICKED THE BUCKET, TOO.


I DON'T REMEMBER MUCH ABOUT THOSE "DARK DAYS."
...ME AND SUNSHINE ...SHE FOUND THE POOR SLOB NEARLY DEAD FROM THIRST.
THE OLD MAN WAS PRACTICALLY BLUE IN THE FACE. SHE CAME TO GET ME..
.. I GOT HIM SOME WATER...
I WOULD DO ANY-THING FOR A DRINK.
BEFORE I KNEW IT, THE OLD GEEZER WAS REWARDING ME W TH HIS MOST PRIZED POS-SESSION. THE RING'S BEEN MY LUCKY CHARM EVER SINCE.
THE OLD MAN, THOUGH, IS A WHOLE 'NOTHER STORY HE NEVER DID GET HIS MEM-ORY BACK AS LONG AS HE DRINKS PLENTY OF WATER HE'S OKAY...
...BUT IF HE DOESN'T, HE TURNS INTO A DISORIENTED MESS!
...BUT I HAD HOPE; HOPE THAT SOMEONE, SOMEHOW WOULD REACH OUT AND HELP.
I SAY, IT'S ALWAYS BEST TO LOOK OUT FER NUMBER ONE. IF YA DON'T, NO ONE WILL!
EVERY MAN STRIVES TO FULFILL HIS DESTINY TO THE BEST OF HIS ABILITIES.
IF I WANTED TA HEAR A SERMON, OLD MAN, I WOULD'VE GONE TA CHURCH, AND IF I WANTED TA HEAR DIME STORE PHILOSOPHY, I WOULD'VE GOTTEN FOR-TUNE COOKIES!
THE OLD MAN DIDN'T MEAN ANY HARM, BILL
THE OLD MAN'S OKAY, BILL... LAY OFF HIM
JUST REMEMBER, OLD MAN, TALK IS EASY, JUST NEVER GIVE ANYTHING AWAY FOR FREE.
EVERYTHING COSTS. AND WE AIN'T GOT ENOUGH OF ANY-THING T' PAY.
...SOMETIMES WE MUST SACRIFICE A PART OF OURSELVES FOR THE GREATER GOOD
THE OLD MAN JUST DOESN T KNOW HOW TO STICK UP FER HIMSELF. THAT'S WHY HE NEEDS ME.
BUT SOMETIMES IT MAKES ME SO MAD I COULD JUST...

...EXPLODE!
MEAL'S OVAH, LOSERS!
ME'N FANCY DAN'RE CLOSIN' THIS PLACE, ORDER O' THE BOARD O' HEALTH!
YOU SA D.T. MONTANA! FOR THEIR HEALTH, THEY'D BETTER NOT BE ANY TROUBLE!
KER-KRASH!
I'D SEEN THESE CRONIES WITH SOME HUNK OF MUSCLE CALLED OX, SCOPING THE BOWERY FOR THE PAST FEW WEEKS THEY'RE THREE OF THE TOUGHEST HIRED GUNS ON THE EAST COAST...
...HIRED BY... NORMAN OSBORNE HE'S THE GREAT AMERICAN SUCCESS STORY
RUTHLESS, THEY CALL IT NOTHING AND NO ONE GETS IN HIS WAY. GOTTA ADMIRE THAT.
EXCEPT, WHAT'S MANAGED TO GET..N HIS WAY NOW... WHAT HE'S H..RED THESE ENFORCERS... TO STEP ON
..S US

I LEARNED LONG AGO, A BLEEDING HEART MAKES FOR A BLOODY FLOOR
C'MON, OLD MAN, LET'S-
STAY BACK, JOHN
DON'T DO THIS, OLD MAN! YOU GOT NOTHIN' TA PROVE TA NOBODY!
AN' I'M NOBODY'S MOP. I LOOK OUT FOR NUMBER ONE
LET 'M BE, JOHNNY BOY
LET GO OF MY ARM, BILL! I DON'T NEED YOU TA TELL ME WHAT TA DO!
BUT THE OLD MAN AIN'T LEARNED THAT YET.
ENOUGH! IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A FIGHT, I'LL OBLIGE YOU!
, AND IF I DON'T GET HIM OUT OF HERE, IT MIGHT BE THE LAST TH NG HE LEARNS
LORD, I COULD USE A DRINK

WE GOT US A FEISTY ONE HERE-- UHHH!
HEY, HE'S STRONGER THAN HE LOOKS UGHFNN!
IS HE CRAZY?
NO ONE FIGHTS MY FIGHTS FOR ME!
NO NO.
STAY BACK, JACK! LET THE CRAZY OLD MAN GET HIS BRAINS BEAT N' BETTER HIM THAN US!
OLD MAN OLD MAN!!
LET'S GO!
YOU SENILE OLD NUT! THINK THEY'D LIFT A FINGER TO HELP YOU?!
C'MON, WE'RE GETTING OUTTA HERE! I KNOW A BACK WAY!
WE ARE UNDER ATTACK...OUR FRIENDS NEED HELP!
Y'GOTTA LEARN, OLD MAN. ALWAYS LOOK OUT FOR NUMBER ONE!

IT GOES AGAINST EVERY FIBER OF MY BEING TO RUN FROM BATTLE!
YEAH, YEAH, VERY PRETTY SPEECH. BUT YOU'LL THANK ME TOMORROW FOR SAVING YOUR SORRY BUTT TODAY!
uhh-- THEN AGAIN, MAYBE NOT I THINK WE FOUND THE OX.
YOU WANTED A FIGHT, PAL? I THINK YOU GOT ONE.
A FIGHT, FROM THIS TIRED, SMELLY PUNK? DON'T MAKE ME LAU--
KRAKK!
SOMETIMES WE ONLY SEE WHAT WE WANT TO SEE
YOU'RE TOUGHER 'N YOU LOOK. I'LL GIVE YOU THAT!
BUT I'M A WHOLE LOT TOUGHER!
...SOMETIMES WE IGNORE WHAT'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF OUR NOSES.
I NEVER WANTED ANY PART OF THIS...

..I DEFINITELY DIDN'T WANT TO SEE THIS!
SKRAAAGK!
WHERE THE OLD MAN FINDS THE STRENGTH, I'LL NEVER KNOW..
YOU HAVE YET TO PROVE THAT, OX.
GOOD LORD.
..WH-WHAT ARE YOU?
BUT THINGS WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN
UGHFN!!!
KRROOOM!
NOT SO TOUGH AFTER ALL...

..WERE YOU.
MOVE IT! WE'VE GOTTA SCRAM
HE'S JUST STANDIN' THERE, LIKE HE'D NEVER SEEN WATER BEFORE.
TAKE MY HAND
...TAKE IT!
..FROZEN IN WIDE-EYED FEAR LIKE A PILOT WHOSE ENGINE STALLS IN MID AIR. LEAVIN' IT TO ME T' TALK HIM IN.
GOOD MAN LET'S GO!
HE WAS THERE FOR ME IT'S THE LEAST I CAN DO FOR HIM
STRANGE THOUGH TO BE SO STRONG, YET BE AFRAID OF SOMETHING LIKE RUNNING WATER... IT CAN'T BE
...THE OX MUST'VE HURT HIM MORE THAN HE LET ON

NIGHT AGAIN TIME FOR BEST...
.. BUT I DOUBT WE'LL BE GETTING ANY IN THIS DUMP
IS THIS THE BEST WE CAN DO?
JACK, EVEN IF WE ALL HAD MONEY FOR BEDS TONIGHT I DON'T THINK IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO BE NEAR THE FLOP-HOUSE NO MORE
I HEAR IT WAS OSBORN THAT CALLED IN THEM ENFORCERS T'SCARE US
I AIN'T AFRAID O NOBODY ESPECIALLY THOSE FREAKS
IF THEY COME BACK I'LL KICK THEIR BUTTS MYSELF
I COULD USE A DRINK BUT NONE OF US HAS ANY MONEY
JACK'S RIGHT WHO ARE THEY TO PUSH US AROUND? WHO THE HECK DOES OSBORN THINK HE IS?
WHAT WE OUGHTA DO'S FIND THEM--
YOU BIG TALKERS CAN JAW ALL YOU WANT. THE OLD MAN AND I ARE STAYIN' HERE
THEIR ACTIONS ARE RASH, JOHN. THEIR QUEST FOR DANGER BODES NOT WELL..
CARING FOR PEOPLE ONLY BRINGS YOU PAIN. WHO CARES WHAT THOSE GUYS DO? LET 'EM GO! NOW C'MON, THERE'S SOME SPACE NEAR THE WATER
I'D PREFER NOT TO GET ANY CLOSER... AND YOU ARE CHANGING THE SUBJECT. THEY ARE YOUR FRIENDS. I KNOW YOU CARE ABOUT THEM
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU? YOU'VE GOT THE STRENGTH OF TWENTY MEN. BUT YOU'RE AFRAID OF WATER??
AND WHAT'S WITH THE POINTED EARS? WHO ARE YOU, OLD MAN?
THERE, I SAID IT. IT HAD BEEN EATING AT ME ALL NIGHT.

THIS IS NOT ABOUT ME, JOHN THIS S ABOUT YOU... YOUR INNER STRENGTH.
WHAT ABOUT WHAT S INSIDE YOU, OLD MAN? WHAT DEMONS 'RE YOU HIDING?
MY PAST IS A BLUR I M NOT HIDING ANYTH NG. I JUST DON'T REMEMBER
EVEN THROUGH MY ANGER .. HIS ANGER
...I KNOW HE'S TELL NG THE TRUTH. NOBLE TO THE END
UNLIKE YOU, JOHN, I DON'T DROWN MYSELF IN INTOXICANTS TO FORGET MY PAST
YOU DON'T KNOW NOTHIN' ABOUT MY PAST... MY PAIN!
I HAD IT ALL... A FAMILY... A CAREER ON THE FAST TRACK..
..THE SKY AND CLOUDS WERE MY PLAY-GROUND!
BUT I LOST IT ALL. THE BLOWHARDS TOOK T ALL AWAY FROM ME! THEY TOLD ME I HAD A PROBLEM
I GOT NO PROBLEM! JUST ONE LITTLE MISTAKE.. ONE MISTAKE AN' IT COST ME EVERYTHING!
MY LICENSE, JOB, FAMILY... ONE BY ONE LIKE SOME TWISTED DOMINO RALLY--
--TAKING EVERYTHING! I'LL NEVER FLY AGA N...
..NEVER PLAY AMONG THE CLOUDS AGA N

THAT VILE LIQUID YOU INGEST DULLS YOUR REFLEXES. IT WARPS YOUR PERCEPTIONS AND IS THE ROOT OF YOUR TROUBLES
NOTHING FOR YOU WILL EVER CHANGE AS LONG AS YOU CONTINUE TO DRINK ALCOHOL.
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE? NOBODY TELLS ME WHAT TO DO!
I OUGHTA JUST PICK YOU UP AND THROW YOU IN THE RIVER, TOUGH GUY! YOU'RE NOT SO PERFECT--HECK YOU'RE AFRAID OF WATER!
WATER, FER PETE'S SAKE
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO MAKE ME ANGRY AT YOU, JOHN I TOLD YOU BEFORE THIS IS NOT ABOUT ME
YOU WANT A FIGHT? FIGHT YOUR OWN INNER DEMONS FACE IT YOU'RE AN ALCOHOLIC.
YOU SHUT UP--
--YOU SHUT THE HELL UP!
YOU LAID HANDS ON ME?
YOU DARE--?!
YOU'VE FALLEN FAR, JOHN MAHONEY
FALL NOW FROM MY SIGHT

STUPID OLD MAN
..DUMB FREAK
..WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS?
WHAT DOES HE KNOW?
I DON'T CARE WHAT THE OLD MAN SAID...
I NEED A DRINK
...BUT I GOT NO MONEY.
AND NO PLACE TO STAY FOR THE NIGHT
WHAT AM I GONNA DO?
WHERE CAN I FIND SOME QUICK
MONEY? THE SHOP'LL OPEN IN ANOTHER FOUR HOURS
IT'S TIME I PUT THE OLD MAN'S GIFT TO GOOD USE

FWOOOOSHH!
WHOA!
NOW THERE GOES A GUY WITHOUT A CARE IN THE WORLD
SO LUCKY TO BE UP THERE, SKY AT HIS BACK SO FREE
LIKE I WAS A LONG TIME AGO. ANCIENT HISTORY NOW
PAWN SHOP OPENS IN A FEW HOURS-- BUT IT'S GETTIN' COLD OUT HERE
A BLANKET OF MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS'LL KEEP ME COMFY TILL THEN. WHO NEEDS THE FLOP-HOUSE?
I DON'T NEED NOTHIN --OR ANYBODY
LET YOURSELF GET TOO ATTACHED TO ANYTHING, AND YOU'LL JUST GET TOSSED LIKE YESTERDAY'S...
TRASH
AN OLD COMIC BOOK
SUB-MARINER
GET THEM EARS
OH

SUDDENLY, THE PIECES FIT, AND I KNOW WHO THE OLD MAN IS I JUST AIN'T GOT A CLUE WHERE...
... OR WHAT I'M GONNA DO ABOUT IT...
TONYEEE. THE PARTY WAS GREAT! NICK!! DID WE HAVE TO WALK?
IT'S A BEAUTIFUL NIGHT, DARLING. BESIDES, I WANT TO SHOW YOU OFF

WHAT ARE YOU STARING AT?
FOR THAT MATTER, WHAT'S A WINO DOING IN THIS PART OF TOWN?
IF THIS COMIC BOOK IS TRUE, THERE'S A POWDERKEG LOOSE IN THIS CITY

FROM WHAT I HEAR, THIS IS A FREE COUNTRY
AND I AM NO "WINO"! I DO NOT DRINK ALCOHOL
JUST WAITING TO GO OFF.

A DERELICT WITH A SENSE OF SOCIAL CONSCIENCE HOW DROLL.
HERE-- TRY A DRINK, ON ME.

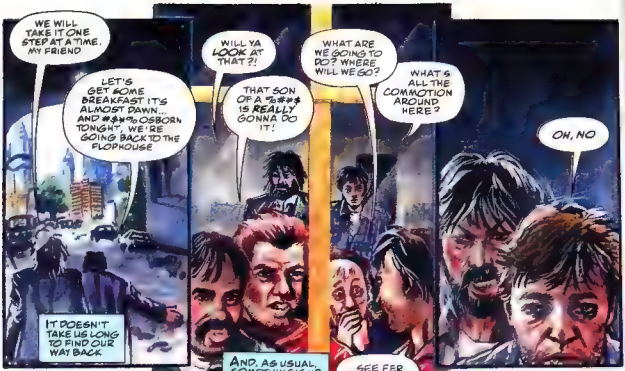
THE OLD MAN'S BEEN MY ANCHOR --BUT MAYBE I'VE BEEN KEEPING HIM STEADY, TOO. MAYBE WE NEED EACH OTHER.

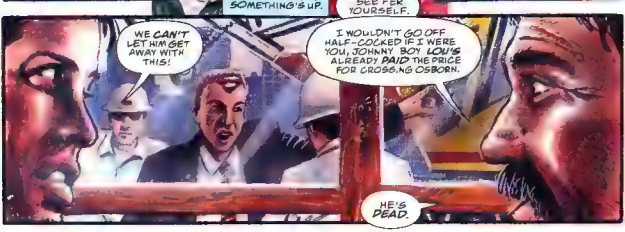
AM I READY TO LOSE ALL THAT INSIDE ANOTHER BOTTLE?
FOR A FISTFUL OF CASH, WOULD I SELL OUT THE BEST FRIEND I EVER HAD?

BUT THEN, THE MAN... THE SUB-MARINER.. IS DANGEROUS
MAYBE I OUGHTA GET RID OF THIS CONNECTION, AND BE FREE OF HIM
HE S BOUND TO FIND OUT WHO HE IS, AND MAYBE IT'S BETTER IF I'M
HEY, JOHN. WHERE'S THAT NUTCASE YOU'RE ALWAYS BABY-SITT.N'?
I GUESS.. THE OLD MAN S ON HIS OWN TONIGHT, BILL LIKE YOU CARE
ABOUT TIME YOU CUT THAT FREAK LOOSE!
HE GIVES YA THE CREEPS! Y'ASK ME, YER BETTER OFF!
I DIDN'T ASK YOU AN' I AIN'T NO DEAR ABBY FOR YOUR BEEFS
YOU GOT A PROBLEM WIT' THE OLD MAN, GO TELL 'IM PERSONALLY.
ALL THOSE MONTHS RUNNING INTER-FERENCE FOR THE OLD MAN AGAINST HOT-HEADS LIKE BILL... NOW I WON-DER WHO I WAS PROTECTING
THE DAY I FACE THAT FREAK IS THE DAY I "PERSONALLY" BASH HIS HEAD IN.
THE DAY YOU TRY WILL BE ONE YOU'LL REMEMBER FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE
I GOTTA LET THE OLD MAN KNOW WHO HE REALLY IS. I OWE HIM THAT MUCH.
HE IS MY FRIEND.

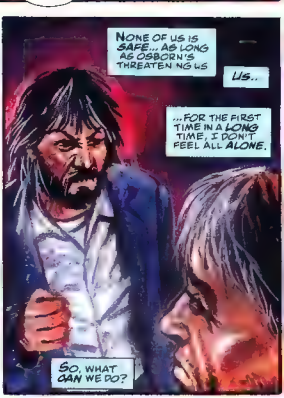
HELLO JOHN
WHA--?
OLD MAN! WHA WHAT WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU ALL NIGHT
..O LO. LOOK, I DON'T WANT TO ARGUE IF YOU'VE COME FOR--
I VE BROUGHT YOU SOMETHING
A PINT! YOU RE A LIFE SAVER! THANKS!
I HAVE NO RIGHT TO JUDGE YOU, JOHN BUT WHO-EVER YOU ARE, YOU ARE MY FRIEND...
IT IS YOUR LIFE, AND YOUR CHOICE.
NO ONE CAN MAKE ME DO ANYTHING...
...THAT I DON T REALLY WANT TO DO.

YOU-- YOU'RE A STAND-UP GUY.
ALL THE TIME WE'VE BEEN TOGETHER, YOU'VE NEVER STEERED ME WRONG.
YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE.. BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE ..
...DOESN'T THAT EVER BOTHER YOU?
THERE ARE TIMES I THINK ABOUT IT. IT CAUSES ME GREAT DISCOMFORT
SO I'D RATHER THINK AHEAD, THAN DWELL ON THE PAST
BUT IF... IF YOU REDISCOVERED YOUR PAST, ALL OF THIS MIGHT BE LEFT BEHIND
I'D BE LEFT BEHIND. THAT'S THE QUESTION, ISN'T IT?
HE'S THE ONLY THING KEEPING ME SOBER 'N THIS TOWN WITHOUT HIM ..
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO DO WHAT I KNOW I HAVE TO. I CAN'T.
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, I WANT YOU TO KNOW... WITHOUT YOUR HELP, I COULDN'T SURVIVE OUT HERE. SO IT'S HIGH TIME I THANKED YOU.
...BY LISTENING TO YOUR ADVICE
FOR STARTERS THIS...
...IS MORE TROUBLE THAN IT'S WORTH.
SKRSSSH!


WE WILL TAKE IT ONE STEP AT A TIME, MY FRIEND
LET'S GET SOME BREAKFAST IT'S ALMOST DAWN... AND #$%^ OSBORN TONIGHT, WE'RE GOING BACK TO THE FLOPHOUSE
IT DOESN'T TAKE US LONG TO FIND OUR WAY BACK
WILL YA LOOK AT THAT?!
THAT SON OF A *&##$ IS REALLY GONNA DO IT!
AND, AS USUAL SOMETHING'S UP.
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO? WHERE WILL WE GO?
WHAT'S ALL THE COMMOTION AROUND HERE?
OH, NO
SEE FER YOURSELF.


WE CAN'T LET HIM GET AWAY WITH THIS!
I WOULDN'T GO OFF HALF-COCKED IF I WERE YOU, JOHNNY BOY. LOU'S ALREADY PAID THE PRICE FOR CROSSING OSBORN.
HE'S DEAD.

WHA...? I JUST SAW HIM A FEW HOURS AGO!
I SHOULD NEVER HAVE LET THEM GO.
AFTER WE LEFT THE TWO OF YOU, WE SPLIT UP... THEY FOUND HIM A COUPLE OF HOURS LATER IN AN ALLEY
JUST ANOTHER BUM, ROLLED FOR QUARTERS, WINDING UP DEAD. THEY'LL NEVER PIN OSBORN OR HIS ENFORCERS FOR IT. SO WHAT CAN WE DO?


NONE OF US IS SAFE... AS LONG AS OSBORN'S THREATENING US
US...
...FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME, I DON'T FEEL ALL ALONE.
SO, WHAT CAN WE DO?

WE CAN WAIT FOR ONE AGONIZING DAY TO PASS, AND TURN INTO NIGHT. AND WHEN NIGHT DOES FALL, WE CAN DO WHAT HAS TO BE DONE.
RENNCHH!
THE LOT IS JUST NEXT DOOR SNEAKING IN IS NO PROBLEM.
WRONNK!
..OSBORN IS EITHER TOO CHEAP OR TOO ARROGANT TO HIRE ANY WATCHMEN AFTER ALL, WHO'S STRONG ENOUGH TO DO WHAT WE PLAN?
KRAKK!
WHO'S CRAZY ENOUGH TO TRY?
C'MON, OLD MAN. YOU CAN DO IT!
I'VE NEVER LIFTED..
...ANYTHING SO BIG...
DO IT FOR LOU!
DO IT FOR ALL OF US!
I KNOW YOU CAN DO IT, OLD MAN!
I JUST KNOW YOU CAN

YES.
...I KNOW I CAN DO THIS
KRRRRAAA

MORNING ARRIVES AND I'M AWAKENED BY SCREECHING SIRENS
WHAT THE $#*%!! IS GOING ON?!
I KNEW THEY WERE COMING, BUT DID THEY HAVE TO SHOW UP SO EARLY?
WILL YA LOOK AT THAT?' I THOUGHT I HEARD A RACKET LAST NIGHT'
DARNEDEST THING I EVER DID SEE'
I HEARD NOISES... BUT I NEVER IMAGINED.. THIS!
THE WHOLE LOT.. EARTH MOVERS AND CRANES... COMPLETELY TOTALED!

THIS IS GREAT! YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS?!
YEAH! THIS WILL TOTALLY SCREW UP OSBORN'S PLANS!
SOMEONE TAUGHT THAT CROOKED SONOVA &%@#!! A LESSON HE'LL NEVER FORGET!
THAT WAS FOR LOU.
..REST IN PEACE, PAL
YOU'VE MISSED BREAKFAST AND LUNCH. AT LEAST DRINK THIS, OLD MAN. IT'LL MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER.
I JUST WANNA REST
FINE... YOU'VE EARNED IT, BUT DRINK THE WATER...
...BELIEVE ME, YOU NEED IT
I CAN'T TAKE DAYS TO MOVE THIS EQUIPMENT! I DON'T HAVE DAYS!
BLAST IT, MAN, I WANT RESULTS, TODAY!
DO YOU HEAR ME?!
THE WHOLE BLOCK HEARD YOU, MR. OSBORN. BUT THAT DOESN'T CHANGE THE LAW OF PHYSICS.

THIS HEAVY EQUIPMENT WILL TAKE EVEN LARGER EQUIPMENT TO MOVE..
...UNLESS YOU CAN CALL THE FF AND GET THE THING TO MOVE IT FOR YOU!
I'M SERIOUS, MR OSBORN
IT MUST'VE BEEN SOMEONE LIKE THAT WHO DESTROYED ALL THIS THERE ARE INDICATIONS OF HAND AND FINGER INDENTATIONS ALL OVER THIS METAL!
HAND INDENTATIONS? THAT WOULD LEAVE FINGERPRINTS...!
HAVE ALL OF THIS COLLECTED.
SOMEONE WILL PAY FOR THIS
BLAST IT... I DIDN'T THINK OF THAT... FINGERPRINTS.
THEY'LL FIND US
...HE'LL HAVE US ALL KILLED FOR THIS!
WAIT. WHAT AM I THINKIN'? THE OLD MAN... NAMOR... COULD TAKE THEM ALL!
BUT THEN HE'D REVEAL HIMSELF. THE WORLD WOULD KNOW.
AND I'D LOSE HIM ANYWAY
THERE'S GOT TO BE SOMETHING

HEY! WHERE ARE YA GOIN'?!
WHATEVER I NEED TO DO, IT AIN'T GOING TO GET DONE SITTING AROUND HERE
IF THE OLD MAN WAKES UP TELL HIM TO STAY PUT!
DO YOU HEAR? RIGHT HERE!
I STARTED THIS I'VE GOTTA MAKE THIS RIGHT.
YEAH I HEARD
WHAT AM I HIS KEEPER?
I'LL BEAT THEM TO IT! GET RID OF IT, SOMEHOW NO EVIDENCE NO FINGERPRINTS!
HEY MISTER WHICH WAY TO THE BEST FLOP HOUSE IN TOWN?
I GOT NO TIME FOR YOU, PUNK. BEAT IT!
FORGET I ASKED! I'LL FIND MY OWN WAY
MIGHT AS WELL SACK DOWN FOR THE NIGHT THIS PLACE IS NO WORSE THAN THE OTHERS
HOTEL
CLO

THIS SITE'S SO HUGE... WHERE DO I START?
WHERE DID WE TOUCH? CAN I FIND THE MARKS?
CAN I COVER THEM?
AM I A-READY
..TOO LATE ?
WELL WELL. WHAT HAVE WE HERE?
LOOKS TO ME LIKE A RAT AMONG THE RUINS, MR OSBORN
HEY! I SEEN THIS JOE SOMEWHERE BEFORE!
BUT I JUST CAN'T REMEMBER WHERE'
LUCKY FOR ME THE OX LIVES UP TO HIS NAMESAKE.. AS IN "DUMB AS--"!
BUT OSBORN...
I'M CURIOUS, MY FRIEND WHY ARE YOU HERE? AND WHAT DO YOU KNOW?
I GOT NOTHIN TA SAY TA YOU!
THAT'S TOO BAD. YOUR SILENCE MIGHT VE SAVED YOU

YOU SEE, I WAS SIMPLY OUT INSPECTING THE DAMAGE SOME VANDALS WROUGHT
BECAUSE YOU'RE SO QUIET, I DIDN'T HEAR THESE BRUTAL STRANGERS...
...AS THEY BEAT YOU TO DEATH.
OMIGOWD...

HOLD ON THERE, COWPOKE!
NO! LEAVE ME ALONE!
A MAN WITH OSBORN'S MONEY CAN MAKE THIS HAPPEN, AND GET AWAY WITH IT.
IF I DON'T TELL HIM WHAT HE WANTS, I'M A DEAD MAN.
YOU CAN MAKE THIS EASY ON YOURSELF-- JUST TELL US WHAT YOU KNOW!
SMAKK!
I DON'T KNOW NOTHIN'!
SOMEHOW I DON'T BELIEVE YOU..
.. I'M A BUSINESSMAN, MR. MAHONEY. I ENJOY THE ART OF NEGOTIATION..
.. SO I'LL MAKE YOU A DEAL.
TELL US WHAT YOU KNOW AND THE OX WON'T KILL YOU

I AIN'T TELLIN' YA NOTHIN'!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME? ONE WORD AND I'M OFF THE HOOK
YOU WILL.
THE OLD MAN CAN TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF...
BUT... I CAN'T... I WON'T... THE OLD MAN MAY NOT KNOW IT.
.. IT'S DOWN TO ME TO KEEP HIS SECRET SAFE
AFTER ALL WE'VE BEEN THROUGH...
SUB-MARINER
..I OWE H.M THAT MUCH
YOU'RE MAKING IT REAL HARD ON YOURSELF, MAC!
TELL MR OSBORN WHAT HE WANTS TO KNOW!
IT'S DOWN TO ME
JUST TELL HIM HOW THE MACHINERY GOT WRECKED!
GO TO H--
. I WON'T LET ME DOWN...
KAWHAM!

...BUT NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS
READIN' ABOUT SUB-MARINER, huh?
WE GOT A STUMBLE-BUM RIGHT HERE WHO'S AS STRONG AS THAT JOKER WAS SUPPOSED TO BE
I WON'T
KRBASH!
...I WON'T RAT THE OLD MAN.
YOU WOULDN'T THINK IT TO LOOK AT THAT OLD BUM BUT JUST WAIT!
huh?? WHAT--?
C'MON, OLD MAN! WE GOT US A NEW TENANT! SHOW HIM WHAT YA CAN DO!
GO AWAY I WANT TO SLEEP! LET ME BE!
SEE HERE PARD'NER, I RECKON YA GOT NO CHOICE BUT TA TELL US WHAT YA KNOW!
YOU CAN ALL GO TO
AT LEAST... I'LL DIE KNOWING ...THE OLD MAN CAN LIVE IN PEACE...
...WITH FRIENDS AROUND HIM...
HE'S NEVER TOO TIRED TO SHOW HOW STRONG HE IS, ARE YA, OLD MAN?
COME ON, YA MANGY BUM--TEAR THIS PHONE BOOK IN HALF! TEAR IT, I SAID!
...WHO'LL STICK BY HIM
GO AWAY, YOU PUNY FLEA!
PLOWW!
...AFTER OSBORN'S ATTACK
AND JOJI'S DEATH...

ALL RIGHT, BOYS-- HE'S WEAKER THAN I'VE EVER SEEN 'IM! LET'S TEACH 'IM A LITTLE LESSON!
I SAID GO AWAY! ALL OF YOU.
PULLING TOGETHER AGAINST A COMMON ENEMY
MOST OF THE TIME WE LOSE SIGHT
OF THE FACT THAT WE'VE ONLY GOT EACH OTHER..
WHAK!
...I KNOW I D.D. UNTIL ...NOW.
HOLD ON! LET HIM ALONE!
CAN'T YOU SEE HE'S ILL? HE'S GOT AMNESIA!
YEAH? WELL, WE'RE GONNA HELP HIM FIND HIS MEMORY!
SURE! WE'LL BEAT IT BACK INTO HIM!
WHY BOTHER? I'LL SHOW YOU AN EASIER WAY!
FIRST, WE'VE GOTTA SEE WHAT HE REALLY LOOKS LIKE!
DEEP DOWN I KNOW
. NO MATTER HOW PAINFUL IT'S BEEN .
WA'T! HIS FACE--! NO--IT CAN'T BE!!
KEEPING THE OLD MAN'S SECRET WILL HAVE BEEN WORTH IT.
IT IS! IT IS!! HE'S THE SUB-MARINER!

AH, HE'S HAD IT
THIS'S GETTIN BORING
KRAMP!
HIS CORPSE WILL HOLD ATTENTION...
...AS A REMINDER NEVER TO CROSS NORMAN OSBORN.
NOT... SO BAD... REALLY...
IF YOU ARE THE SUB-MARINER, I KNOW THE ONE THING THAT'LL BRING BACK YOUR MEMORY! RELAX, MISTER! I M NOT GONNA DROP YOU! NOT TILL WE COME TO
..NOTHING TO FEAR N DEATH.
...NOT WHEN.. I WON. I DIDN'T..TELL THEM
THAT MAKES... MY FEAR... SEEM . SILLY...
..I.KE THE OLD MAN'S ...TERROR ..OF
"...THE SEA!"

CAN T
CAN T TELL HOW LONG I VE BEEN OUT BUT I GUESS I SHOULD BE GLAD
TO HAVE WOKEN UP AT ALL.
I SHOULD BE DEAD THAT'S WHAT THEY LEFT ME FOR
I'VE NEVER BEEN BEATEN LIKE THAT BEFORE
, BUT I D DN'T RAT I DIDN T LET H M DOWN
AND I D GO THROUGH T AGAIN TO PROTECT THE
.. OLD MAN! WHERE S HE?!
WHERE THE #%% HAVE YOU BEEN?
YOU LOOK WORSE THAN WE DO!
WHAT HAPPENED HERE? DID THE ENFORCERS--?
NAW NOT THEM MUGS
T WAS YOUR PAL, "THE OLD MAN '

THAT HUMAN TORCH KID FROM THE FANTASTICAL FOUR WUZ HERE
GOT THE O-D MAN ALL RILED UP. SAID SOME SUMP'N ABOUT HIM BEIN' THE SUB-MARINER!
THEN JUST FLEW OUTTA HERE WITH HIM, TOWARD THE HARBOR.
HE DID WHAT?!
THE OLD MAN'S SCARED TO DEATH OF WATER!
WHATTAYA TALKIN' ABOUT, YA DOT? GOIN'S TO THE KID, THE OLD MAN IS THE SUB-MARINER! HE BREATHES THE STUFF
FARTHER OUT TO SEA THAT FREAK IS THE BETTER FOR ME. WHO NEEDS H.M.?
WHO NEEDS HIM? NUH!
ALL I TOOK FOR HIM, ALL FOR NOTHING.
NO NOT FOR NOTH'NG
I'M NOT GIV'NG UP ON H.M.
HE'S MY FRIEND. HE MAY STILL NEED ME
ARE YOU CRAZY JOHN?!
THE RADIO SAYS THE OLD M--SUB-MARINER IS THREATENING THE ENTIRE CITY! YOU WON'T GET PAST THE--
IT DOESN'T MATTER, I'VE GOTTA FIND HIM!
THERE'S SOMETHING I OWE HIM...
...FOR EVERYTHING HE'S DONE FOR ME

I CAN'T BE TOO LATE!
GET BACK!
ONE SIDE! LEMME THROUGH!
HELP!!
HE'S CALLING UP THE MONSTERS!
WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE!
I GOTTA MAKE IT ONE STEP AT A TIME
HE'S THE ONLY ONE THAT'S BEEN THERE FOR ME.
NEVER HAD NOBODY LIKE THAT.
WITHOUT HIM WHAT'VE I GOT TO STAY SOBER FOR?
JUST MYSELF...
C'MON, MACK! YOU CAN'T STAY HERE THEY'RE EVACUATING THIS AREA! ANY MINUTE, THE DOCKS'RE GOING TO BECOME A WAR ZONE!
LEAVE ME ALONE!
WITHOUT HIM.

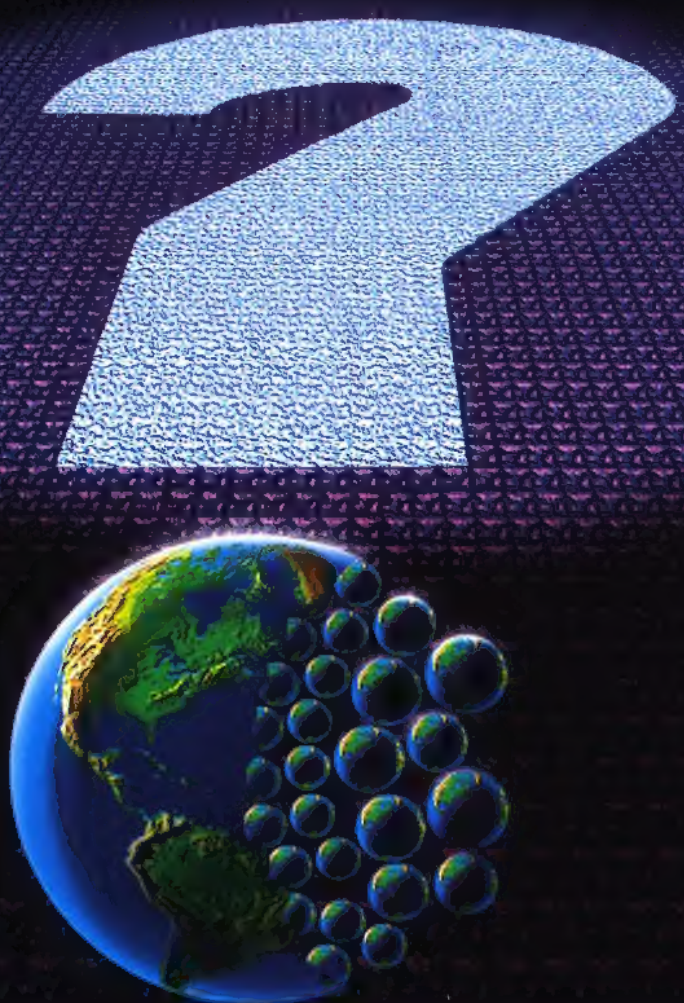
WEEKS LATER IN THE BOWERY
MY LORD -- T S HIM! HE S COMIN BACK - N BROAD DAYLIGHT! THE SUB-MARINER!
STAY BACK-- THE BUGLE SAYS HE'S DANGEROUS!
WHERE IS THE ONE CALLED JOHN MAHONEY H.D NG?!
AND YOL KNOW WHY
THAT RING S MY ATLANTEAN SEAL OF GOVERNORSHIP
I M NOT HIDING, NAMOR I KNEW YOU'D COME BACK
LOOK OUT! HE'S COME BACK FOR REVENGE!
. I TRULY MUST HAVE BEEN OUT OF MY MIND TO ALLOW SURFACE SCUM LIKE YOU TO POSSESS IT
I KNEW YOU D COME BACK, BECAUSE I KNOW YOL
MAYBE BETTER THAN YOU KNOW YOURSELF
THE MAN YOU KNEW NO LONGER EXISTS.
. . F HE TRULY EVER DID

I TRUST MY POINT IS MADE?
SURE SURE
I'VE BEEN WAITING TO RETURN IT TO YOU
AND TO TELL YOU YOUR FRIENDSHIP HAS MEANT A LOT TO ME TO THANK YOU IN PERSON
FOR A WHILE, AFTER YOU LEFT, THE RING WAS ALL I HAD TO HOLD ONTO ALL OF YOUR STRENGTH I HAD LEFT...
...UNTIL I FIGURED OUT IT WAS MY STRENGTH I WAS USING
AND THAT THAT WAS ENOUGH
I DON'T NEED THIS ANYMORE THANKS FOR THE LOAN
YOU ARE WELCOME
MY WINGS!! I THOUGHT I'D LOST THEM FOR GOOD...
...BUT HE HELD ONTO THEM THERE IS SOMETHING OF THE MAN I KNEW, IN THERE
THOUGH WE'VE BOTH COME FULL CIRCLE NOW, THE PRINCE AND I.
I HOPE THE ROAD TO RECOVERY HE TRAVELS
...IS SMOOTHER THAN THE ONE I'M ON

NEW YORK CITY I USED TO HATE THESE STREETS
THEN I SAW THEM FROM A NEW ANGLE REALLY SAW THEM FOR THE FIRST TIME
MY NAME IS JOHN..
..AND I'M AN ALCOHOLIC..
I LIVE EVERY DAY WITH MY OWN INNER DEMONS PULLING ME DOWN...
..BUT I'M STILL FLYING.
END

WHAT IF...

EVERY MARVEL COMIC YOU EVER READ WAS TOTALLY DIFFERENT



WHAT IF? • TALES OF THE ALTERNIVERSE
MONTHLY FROM MARVEL

TM & © 1995 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved

And they got a Marvel...

Once, the world was awed at a great storm of power in its midst -- but among the down-and-out on Manhattan's Lower East Side, that storm was barely a ripple. There, a prince walked among these lost souls, as lost as they. His memory stolen and his life a shambles, an Atlantean prince lived as a pauper.

Once, there were men -- the lost, forgotten refuse of a city -- who truly needed a hero.

And they got a Marvel...

Scanned by Hans Dampf

THE MAN I AM MEANS TO SEE THAT YOU RETURN WHAT RIGHTFULLY BELONGS TO NAMOR, PRINCE OF ATLANTIS!
IF YOU WISH TO SEE TOMORROW.
I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD AGAIN, FROM THE DEPTHS I'D FALLEN.
BUT IT'S HAPPENING.
I'M FLYING.